

Report Title	EMPTY PROPERTIES
Meeting	Colne and District Committee
Meeting Date	6 th November 2025
Report Author	Simon O'Hara
Directorate	Housing & Environmental Health
Lead Executive Member(s)	Councillor Zafar Ali
Wards Affected	Boulsworth and Foulridge, Waterside and Horsfield, Vivary Bridge
Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt	Part Exempt
Appendices (if any)	Empty property addresses (not for publication)

1. Executive Summary

To inform the Committee on the current position regarding unoccupied properties in the Colne District. There are a number of known vacant houses in the Colne District Committee area. These houses are a wasted resource, attract anti-social behaviour and detract from the amenity and prosperity of the area.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee note the current position with empty houses in their wards.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

To ensure that empty properties in the borough are managed effectively, using the appropriate enforcement action when necessary to bring vacant homes back into use.

Pendle Council's Local Plan Core Strategy, which was adopted on the 17th December 2015, states that the authority needs to address the issues of redundant, low demand housing, and by doing so, will help create a vibrant housing market offering a mix of quality, affordable housing for all.

Over the Borough the total number of properties in taxation, that have been empty for more than six months is 892 properties (included within this are 165 unoccupied but substantially furnished houses). There are also 230 properties that are exempt from taxation. This represents a vacancy rate of 2.7%. This is less than the averages for Lancashire (3.4%) and England (2.8% in 2024).

There are currently 214 residential properties in Colne and District Committee area which have been empty for more than six months, which is an increase of 51 from the August 2025 figure of 163. This

represents 2.0% of the housing stock covered by the Committees wards. There are a further 89 which are exempt from taxation. The table below shows the number of empty properties in each ward for 'over 6 months up to 2 years' and 'over 2 years' (this data includes unoccupied but substantially furnished / second homes).

Ward	Over 6 months to 2 years	Over 2 years	Total
Boulsworth	24	22	46
Foulridge	10	2	12
Horsfield	24	20	44
Vivary Bridge	27	22	49
Waterside	37	26	63
Committee Area Total			214

The number of vacant houses in the Colne and District Committee wards is below the average for both Lancashire and England. Even though overall numbers are low there are a number of vacant houses in the area that are a priority and require action to bring them back into use and we will be targeting these to try and bring them back into use.

The Council has a range of enforcement powers to try and bring empty properties back into use, for example via a Compulsory purchase order, which has been used successfully recently to acquire properties in the Borough.

Could the Committee please note, case law exists which implies that the Council should only visit and view properties if a preliminary check, such as from council tax records, indicates it is unoccupied.

4. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

New Homes Bonus is a grant paid to all English authorities in recognition of net additions to effective housing stock in their area. The Bonus is intended to be a permanent incentive paid in respect of new build, conversions, and long-term empty properties brought back into effective use.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications - NONE

5.3 Climate and Biodiversity Implications – NONE

5.5 Human Resources Implications - NONE

5.6 Equality and Diversity Implications – NONE

6. Consultation - NONE

7. Alternative Options Considered – N/A

8. Statutory Officer Sign off (please put an x in the relevant box below)

Section 151 Officer	x
Monitoring Officer	x

9. Background Documents

1. Pendle Council's Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 17/12/15)

Contact Officers

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Empty property addresses by ward (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)